

HUMBO THE HIPPO AND LITTLE-BOY-BUMBO



STORY *and* DRAWINGS *by*
ERICK BERRY

HARPER & BROTHERS ESTABLISHED 1817



Jungle

Bananas

The Market

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When the
Moon was Big
and High

The-Place-
Where-the-
Water-Comes-Up

Little-Boy-
Bumbo's
House

Jungle

The-Place-
Where-the
Water-Flows

Breadfruit

Paw-Paws

Galumbo's
House

Sugarcane



HUMBO-THE-HIPPO AND LITTLE-BOY-BUMBO
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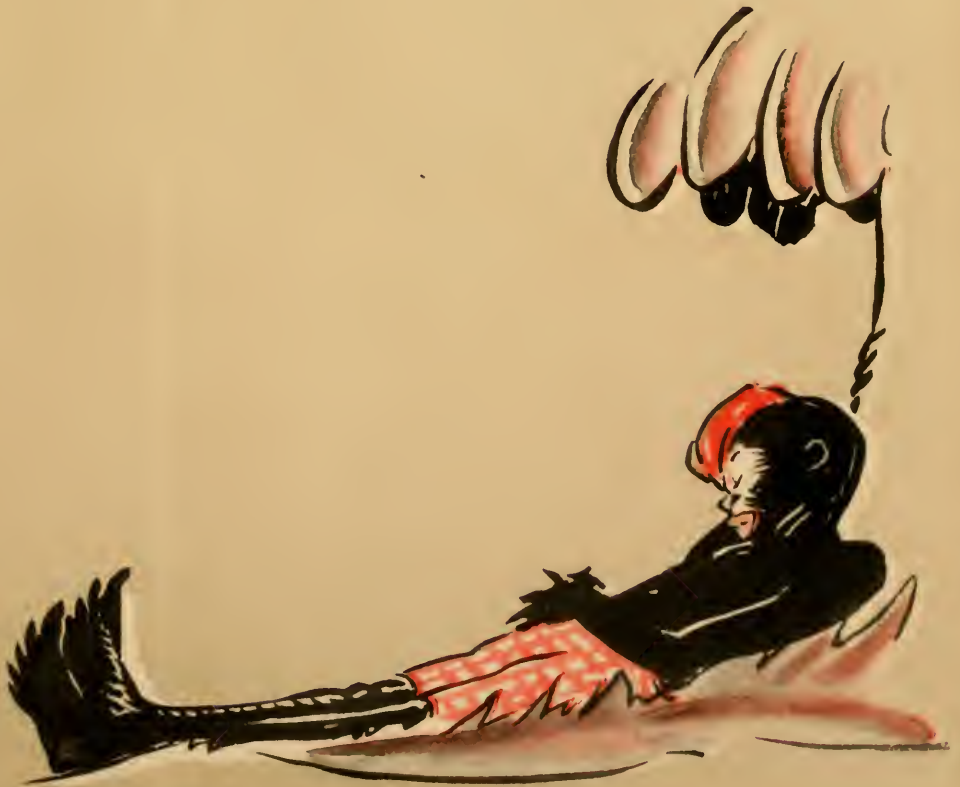
"I want a path," said Mammy Bumbo, "from the house to the village. I'm tired of living way off here in the jungle where nobody ever comes."

"There is a path," said Pappy Bumbo as he looked up from the stick he was whittling.

"There's a path to the Place-Where-The-Water-Comes-Up," said Mammy Bumbo, "but that's all. I can't get through the path to the village. It's too small, and it's all tall green grass and low green boughs. You and Little-Boy-Bumbo can get through, but I can't. I can't go to call on the Galumbos. I can't get down to the Stream-That-Flows. I can't go to market. I want a path."



"All right," said Pappy Bumbo, hastily. "Little-Boy-Bumbo and I will make a path to-morrow. I'm too busy to-day." And he went off to work.



Mammy Bumbo gave Little-Boy-Bumbo a penny. "Run down through the tall green grass and the low green boughs to the village," she said, "and bring back a bunch of bananas for supper. You can wear your Pappy's red coat, but mind you be back before the moon is big and high."

It was a long way to the village. Little-Boy-Bumbo in his Pappy's red coat started out along the wide path that leads to the Place-Where-The-Water-Comes-Up.



When he got there he was thirsty; so he lay face down, with his hands on two stones, and took a long green drink. Then he heard a noise and looked up.

The noise stopped. Little-Boy-Bumbo took another drink.

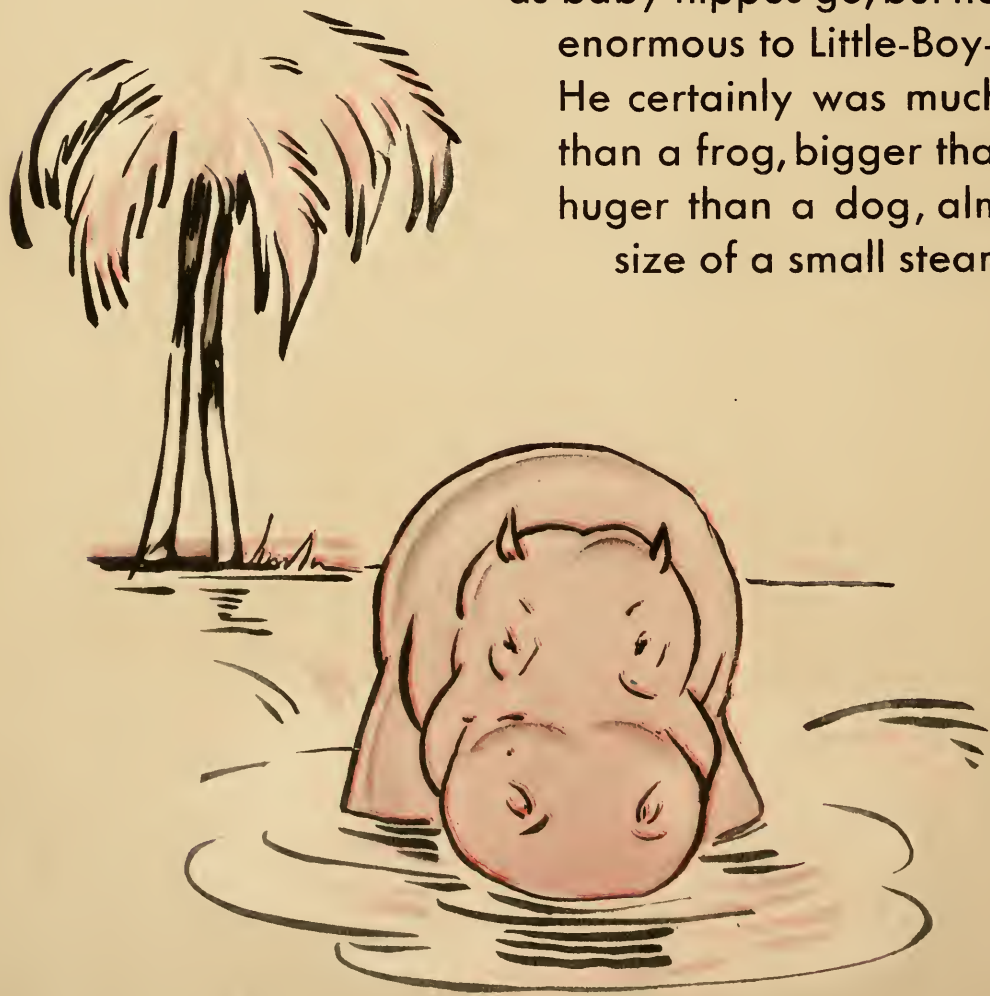
The noise came again. Little-Boy-Bumbo stopped and looked up.



Something was standing with its legs, like four bolsters, in the water, its head like a coal scuttle up in the air. It had two tiny twinkly eyes and little prickly ears and a large, loose, pinky-gray, wrinkly skin.

It was Humbo, the Baby Hippo.

He was really a very small hippo as baby hippos go, but he looked enormous to Little-Boy-Bumbo. He certainly was much larger than a frog, bigger than a cat, huger than a dog, almost the size of a small steam-roller.



Little-Boy-Bumbo was scared. He got up. He put his penny in his hair, which was short and black and woolly. It was safer than his mouth, which might have swallowed the penny; it was so used to swallowing. He thought about going home—going rather quickly.



The Baby Hippo, whose name was Humbo, said, "Hug...h!" and when a hippo says, "Hug...h!" that means "I'm sleepy." He opened his mouth in a wide pink yawn.

"O...oh!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "My Pappy does that, too." And he laughed. He wasn't a bit afraid any more. Nothing could be dangerous when it looked so sleepy.



Humbo wasn't a bit dangerous. He had overslept this morning and got left behind when his Pappy and Mammy had sperloshed off down to another cool damp pool. His Mammy had said, "We'll just let that child get lost for once. Then next time he'll wake up when I call him. The lazy little thing!"

That was why Humbo happened to be where he was. He waded out of the water and ambled around to the place where Little-Boy-Bumbo stood. Bumbo waited, all ready to run, in case he needed to. But he didn't need to.

Humbo said, "Uhgh!" and when a hippo says, "Uhgh!" it means "Howdy!"



"Howdy yourself!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Where are you going? I'm going to the village to buy bananas for my Mammy and I'm to be back before the moon is big and high. Want to go along? Have you got a Mammy?"

Humbo said, "Hu...gh!" and when a hippo says, "Hu...gh!" it means "Yes."

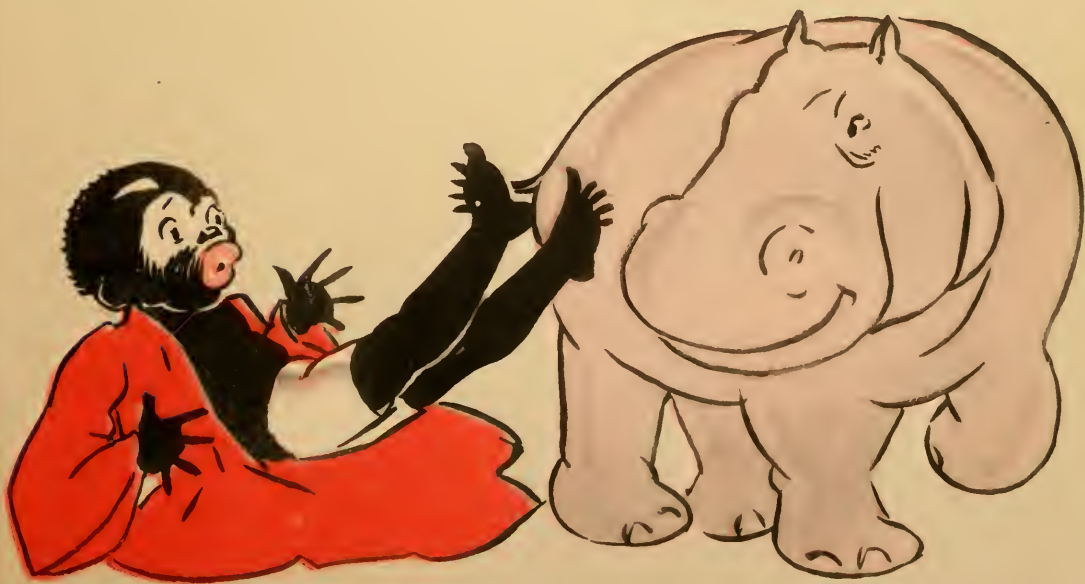
Little-Boy-Bumbo went on ahead, down the path that got narrow and little, towards the low green boughs of the jungle. Humbo shuffled along behind on his feet that were big and flat. His hips were wide and wherever he walked the path got flat like his feet, wide like his hips. But he walked so fast that Little-Boy-Bumbo felt a terrible draft on the back of his neck and there was Humbo, right close at his heels.



"Hi!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo, "you're too quick for me. Look here, can I ride?"

"M...mugh!" said Humbo. And when a hippo says that, he means "Why not?"

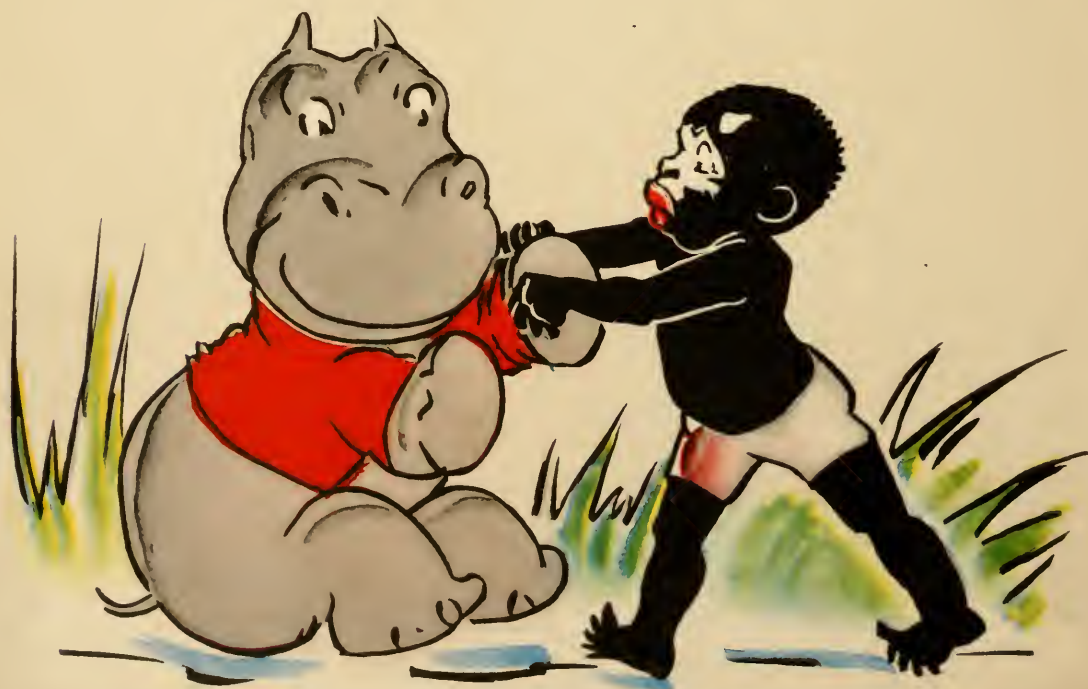
So Little-Boy-Bumbo scrambled up on Humbo's back. It was high and round and wet and slippery. Little-Boy Bumbo slid right off, into the long green grass at the side of the path.



"I need a saddle," he said. He looked around. There was absolutely nothing to make a saddle out of.

"Look here, can you put on my coat?" said Little-Boy-Bumbo.

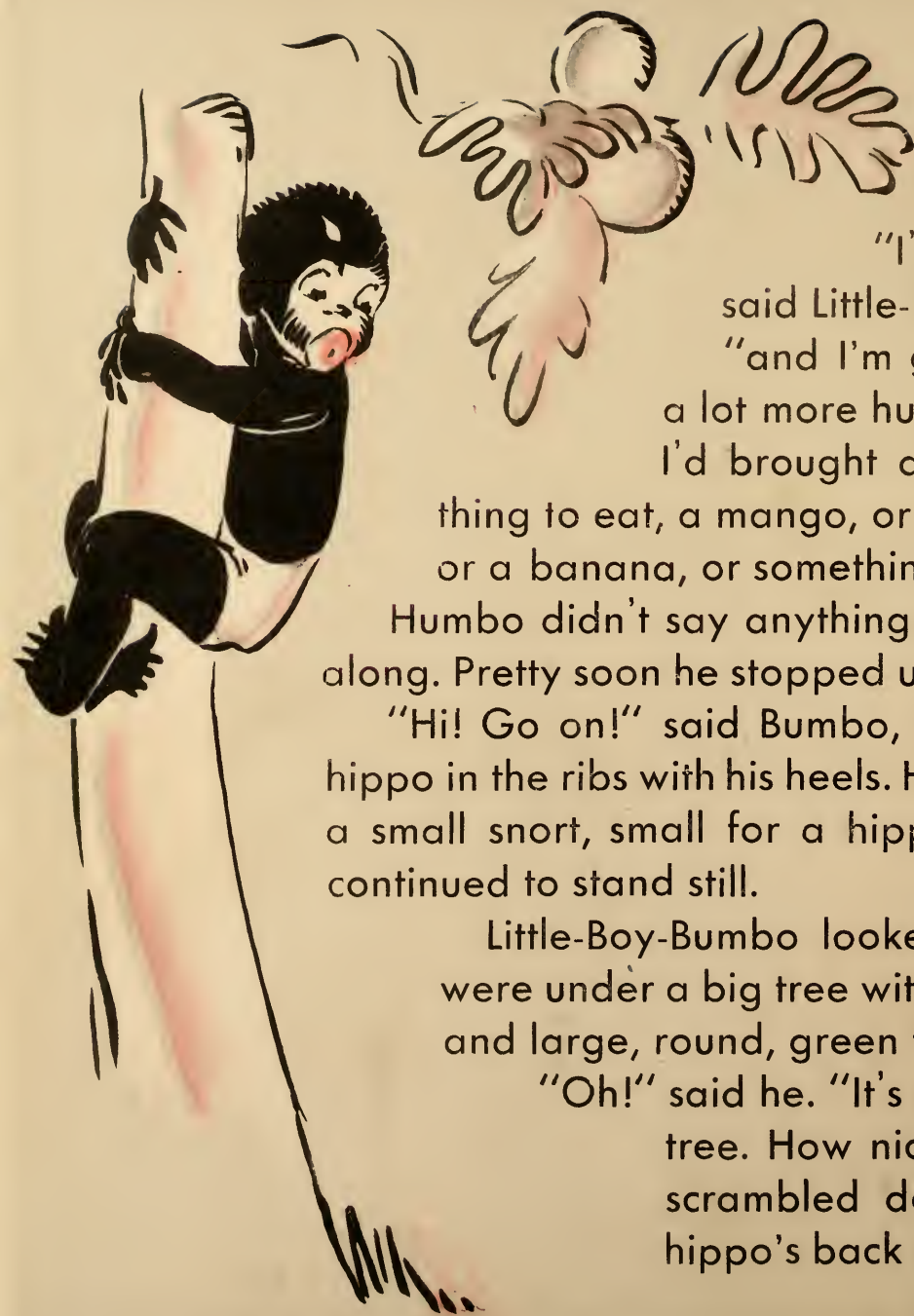
Humbo stood still and waited; possibly that meant he'd try. Little-Boy-Bumbo took off his red coat and Humbo sat back on his heels and Bumbo sque...e...ezed the hippo into it. It was kind of a tight fit and there weren't any wrinkles left over. But it was awfully becoming and Little-Boy-Bumbo stood off and looked at the hippo.



"You look just splendid," he said. "Now I'll have something to hang on to." He scrambled up on Humbo's back. The red coat wasn't so wet and slippery and Bumbo could take hold of the collar and hang on. He put his feet into the pockets, which made beautiful stirrups, and Humbo started to trot. They went along at a marvelous pace, swifter than a slow jack rabbit, faster than a snail, quicker than a tortoise. Why, they'd be back long before the moon was big and high!

Then they came to the jungle, quite a little jungle. But the trees were big and tall, and the low green boughs swept down. Humbo's big flat feet made a wide flat track, and Little-Boy-Bumbo stuck to his back as though he had been glued there.





"I'm hungry,"
said Little-Boy-Bumbo,
"and I'm going to be
a lot more hungry. I wish
I'd brought along some-
thing to eat, a mango, or a pawpaw,
or a banana, or something."

Humbo didn't say anything; just trotted
along. Pretty soon he stopped under a tree.

"Hi! Go on!" said Bumbo, digging the
hippo in the ribs with his heels. Humbo gave
a small snort, small for a hippo, and just
continued to stand still.

Little-Boy-Bumbo looked up. They
were under a big tree with big leaves
and large, round, green fruit.

"Oh!" said he. "It's a breadfruit
tree. How nice!" And he
scrambled down off the
hippo's back and shinned
up the tree.

He threw down a breadfruit and it broke open. He started down the tree to get it, but before he could reach the ground, Humbo had opened wide his large pink mouth and gobbled up the fruit.

Little-Boy-Bumbo went up the tree again. This time he threw down two breadfruit. But before he could get all the way down to them, Humbo had opened wide his large pink mouth and eaten them both. They were very good. You could tell that by his expression.

"Hi!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Stop that! I'm hungry, too." So this time he threw down three breadfruit, and Humbo was so busy eating two of them that Bumbo got down in time to save the third. It tasted very good. He ate it all up and licked his lips, and Humbo licked his, too. Then Little-Boy-Bumbo climbed back on the hippo and they started off again, along the jungle path where the low green boughs sweep down.



After a while they came out on the other side of the very small jungle. It had been cool under the trees, but the sun, on the tall green grass, was hot and very bright.

"I wish I had a parasol," said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "It's hot sitting up here in the sun. How are you down there?"

Humbo said nothing, which in hippo talk means "Nothing."

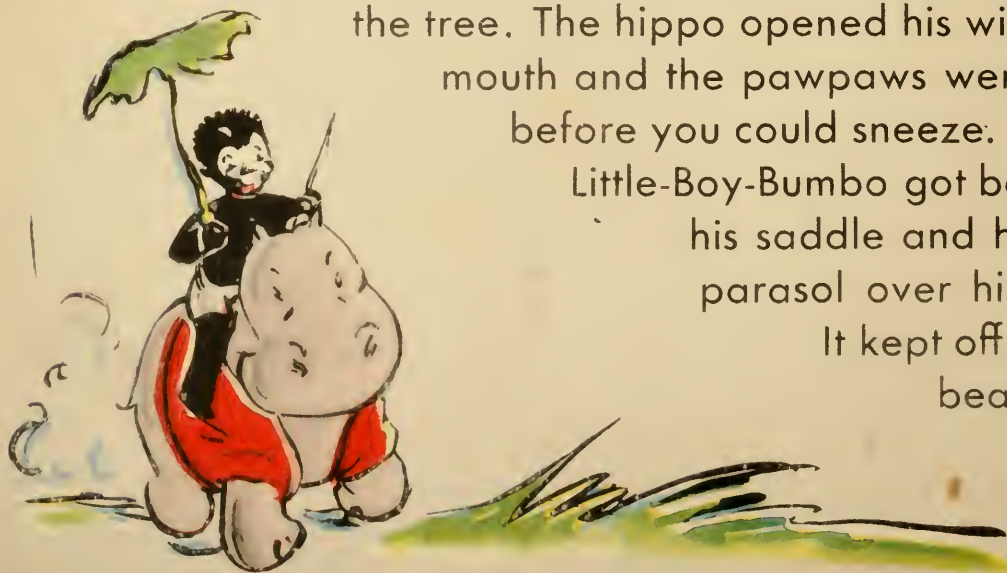
They went along for a while and the sun got hotter and hotter. Then Humbo stopped, right under a little tree.

It was a very little tree, a pawpaw tree. Little-Boy-Bumbo looked at it.

"That's a splendid idea," he said. "I'll pick it for a parasol to keep off the sun."

He scrambled down, picked the little tree, and gave the two pawpaws on it to Humbo. They weren't very big or very ripe, and after all Humbo had discovered the tree. The hippo opened his wide pink mouth and the pawpaws were gone before you could sneeze.

Little-Boy-Bumbo got back into his saddle and held the parasol over his head. It kept off the sun beautifully.



Then pretty soon the grass got shorter and they came to some houses.

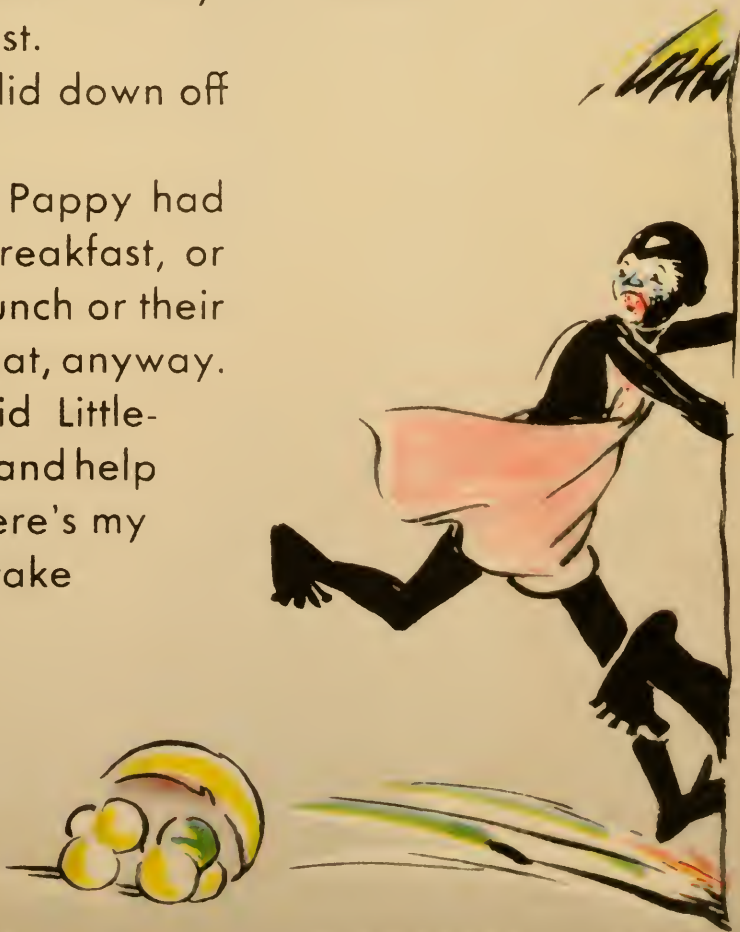
"This is where Galumbo and Mr. and Mrs. Galumbo live," said Bumbo. "Galumbo took my best bow and arrow last week. Oh, there he is now and his Pappy is with him."

The Galumbos were sitting under a tree in front of their house. But when they saw a hippo coming down the narrow green path from the jungle they got up and hurried away from there. They hurried very fast.

Little-Boy-Bumbo slid down off Humbo's back.

Galumbo and his Pappy had been eating their breakfast, or maybe it was their lunch or their tea. It was things to eat, anyway.

"Nice things," said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Come and help me, Humbo. And here's my bow and arrow. I'll take them along, too."



Humbo ate most of the food the Galumbos had left when they ran away. Bumbo had to eat fast to get any for himself.

It was shady there and the sun was hot and they had come a long way and had a big feast. Humbo began to yawn, and that made Little-Boy-Bumbo yawn, too. They were both ve..ry sle...e..epy. Oh, so...o sleepy!

Humbo sniffled and snuffled around, but there wasn't anything more to eat. They had eaten it all up. So he sat down under a tree and licked his lips. Pretty soon his little eyes were tight shut and he was snoring. Little-Boy-Bumbo was asleep, too. They had a beautiful nap.



When Little-Boy-Bumbo opened his eyes he thought about all that lovely food. And suddenly he remembered the penny in his hair and the bananas for his Mammy and that he must be back home before the moon was big and high. He jumped up.

"Oh, my goodness!" said Bumbo. "I forgot about those bananas. Come on, Humbo. We've got to hurry."

Humbo only opened one little twinkly eye. Bumbo prodded him with his foot. "Get up," he said.

So the hippo gave a sigh and scrambled to his wide flat feet and Little-Boy-Bumbo scrabbled onto his back again.



After a little they came to a place where there was a tall, green forest of sugar cane.

"Sugar cane!" cried Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Humbo, wouldn't you like some lovely sugar cane to eat?"

The Baby Hippo stopped and waited. Little-Boy-Bumbo took his feet out of the pockets of the red coat and slid down the broad, slippery back. He found some beautiful ripe sugar cane and broke it off, and Humbo opened his wide pink mouth and Bumbo put the sugar cane in it. It took lots and lots of sugar cane to fill Humbo's wide pink mouth.



Bumbo broke off a long stick for himself. It was like sugar candy, so sweet and good to suck on. He climbed back onto the red coat saddle and they started off again, Bumbo holding his bow and arrow and his parasol and sucking his sugar cane.

They came to the bank of the Place-Where-The-Water-Flows. There wasn't any boat there. On the other bank the women from the village knelt and washed shirts and skirts and other things.



"It's not deep at all," said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Perhaps if you can swim across, I can sit on your back. Can you swim?"

Humbo said, "U...ugh!" And when a hippo says "U...ugh!" he means "Possibly!" And he stepped into the water. He walked in just as if it were dry land, and the water got higher and higher and he went in deeper and deeper.



"Hi!" said Bumbo. "I'm getting wet!"

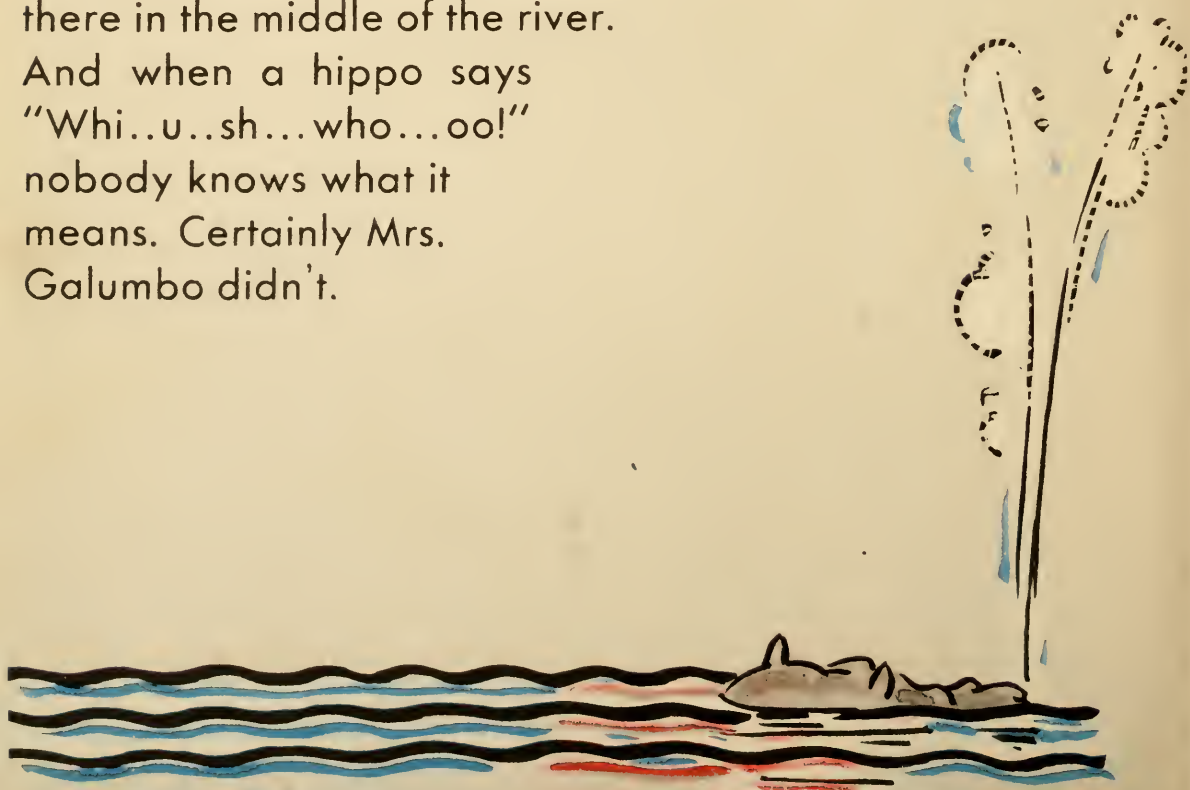
But Humbo didn't stop. He just kept right on walking. Perhaps he didn't even know that the water was wet. Little-Boy-Bumbo couldn't swim and the water came up to his eyes. He held his breath, and then began to slip. He dug his toes in, and tried to find the coat pockets for his feet, but he kept right on slipping. Pretty soon he slipped right off, down into the water.



He stood up. His feet found a place to walk and then the water got less deep.

One of the women waded out and reached him with a pole. It was Mrs. Galumbo, and she said, "What do you mean by making the Water-That-Flows so muddy that we can't get our clothes clean! She laid Little-Boy-Bumbo right over her lap, face side down.

But Humbo, who was still under the water, stuck out two little bits of his nose and let go a gr..e..at "Whi..u..sh...who...oo!" It was like a geyser or a waterspout, there in the middle of the river. And when a hippo says "Whi..u..sh...who...oo!" nobody knows what it means. Certainly Mrs. Galumbo didn't.



She dropped Little-Boy-Bumbo right there. She ran so fast that she overtook the others who had started first. She ran so fast that her feet nearly left all the rest of her behind.

Humbo came wading out of the water. He looked very pleased with himself and said, "Hrunph!" and when a hippo says "Hrunph!" it means "Didn't I do that well?"

"You did it beautifully," said Bumbo, "and just in time, too." He rubbed the seat of his pants where Mrs. Galumbo's large flat hand had nearly landed. "We must hurry now," he said, "or we won't get home in time, before the moon is big and high."

So Humbo shook himself to get rid of the water, and Bumbo climbed on the hippo's back. He stuck his feet into the pockets of the red coat and they pattered off toward the Village-Where-Bananas-Are-Sold.



It wasn't very far. But they had slept quite a long time and been quite a long time on the way. The sun was getting low and pretty soon it would be dark.

"Hurry!" said Bumbo, digging his heels into Humbo's ribs. Humbo hurried on his large flat feet. Pretty soon they reached the market place. There were lots of good things to eat in the market. There were places you could buy oranges, and places you could buy sugar cane, and places where a penny would buy all the bananas you could carry away. Then there were little booths where people sold cakes, and other places where they sold candy.



But Humbo and Little-Boy-Bumbo didn't find anyone in the market. There seemed to be a lot of people a long way off, going quite rapidly away from the market. There was nobody at all in the little booths that sold cakes, or the places where you could buy, for a penny, all the bananas you could carry away.

"Ki!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "Look at all the perfectly lovely things to eat!"

"M..ugh!" said Humbo, and when a hippo says "M..ugh!" it means "I see them!"



He opened his wide pink mouth and began to gobble oranges and mangoes, pawpaws and cakes. Little-Boy-Bumbo found a plate of sweetmeats that some one, going away in a hurry, had left behind. And he sat down with them. They were especially nice sweetmeats and he liked them very much. He ate them all up.



Then they went on to another place in the market and found some melons. Little-Boy-Bumbo had one and Humbo had quite a few. In fact, he finished all those that Bumbo left.

So they went on to another place and found some bananas.

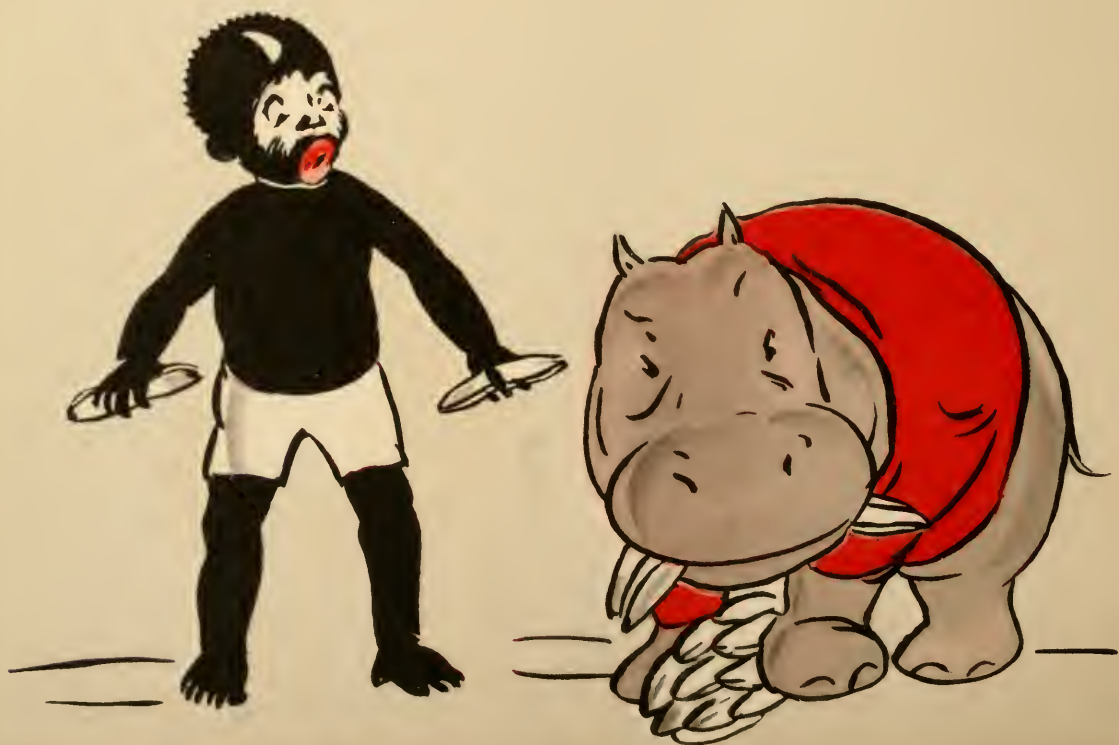


"Hi! Don't eat those!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo. "My Mammy sent me for bananas and I must take some home to her."

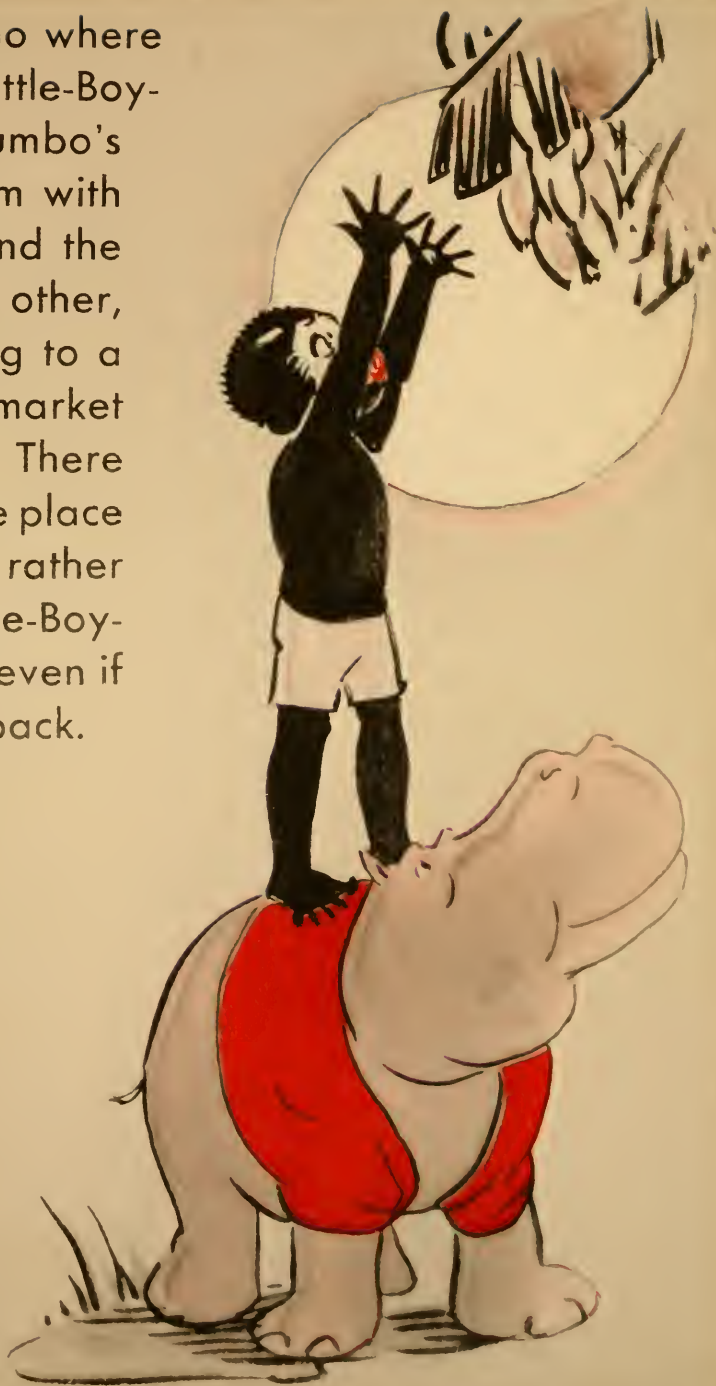
But Humbo went right on eating bananas. It seemed as though he had had nothing to eat for ages and ages. His mouth would take in a whole bunch at a time—a big bunch. Pretty soon there weren't any bananas left.

"Now look at that!" said Bumbo. "We'll have to find some more bananas."

But it was getting late and it was getting dark and there weren't any more bananas in the market.

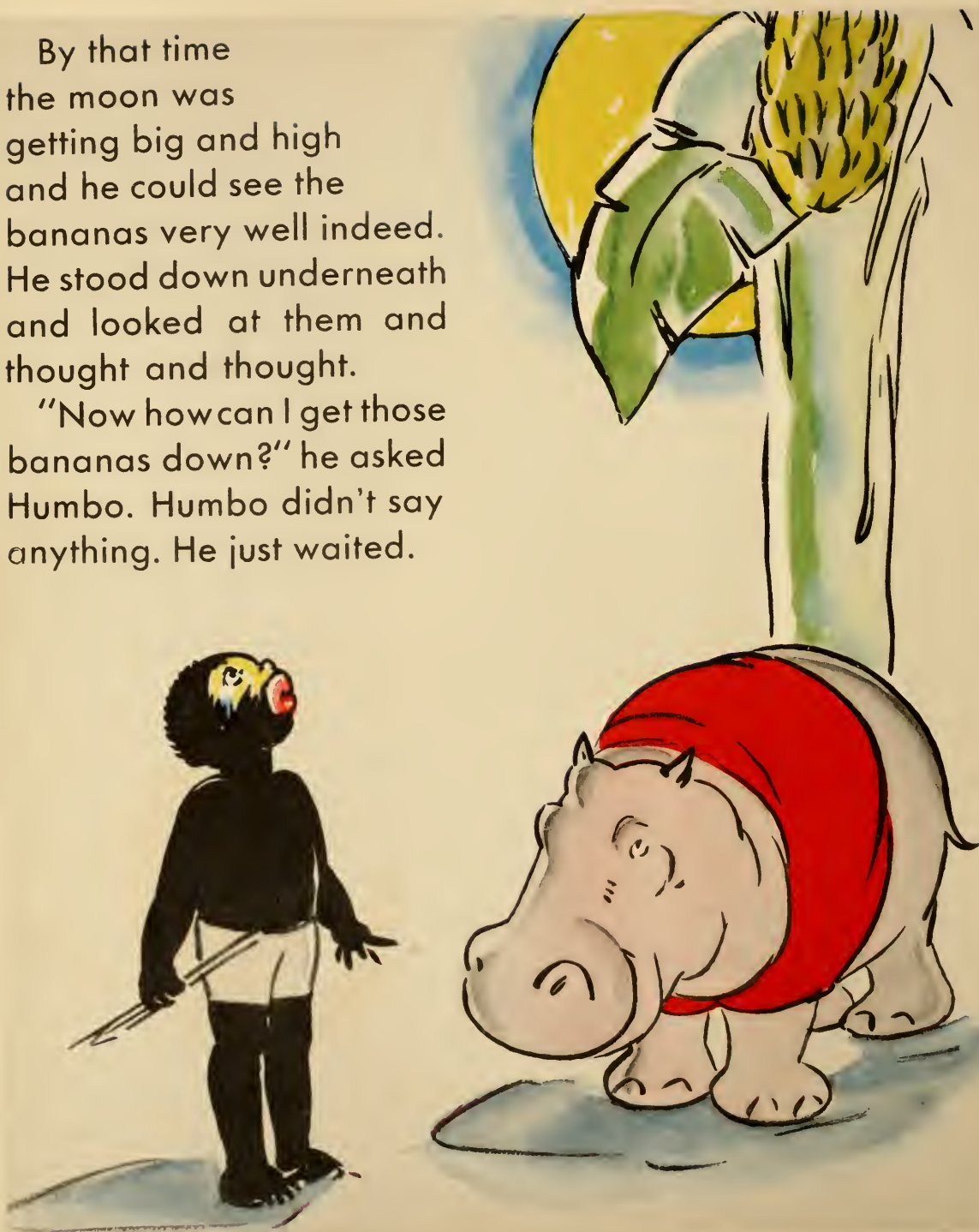


"We'll just have to go where bananas grow," said Little-Boy-Bumbo. He got on Humbo's back and prodded him with a foot on one side and the bow and arrow on the other, and they trotted along to a place beyond the market where bananas grew. There was a fence around the place and the bananas grew rather high, too high for Little-Boy-Bumbo to reach them even if he stood on Humbo's back. He wasn't very tall.



By that time the moon was getting big and high and he could see the bananas very well indeed. He stood down underneath and looked at them and thought and thought.

"Now how can I get those bananas down?" he asked Humbo. Humbo didn't say anything. He just waited.



Then Little-Boy-Bumbo took his bow and fitted the arrow to it. He drew the string and took aim and let go.

The string said, "Whan...g!" The arrow said, "Whi...ish!" and went straight for the stem of a bunch of bananas.

It cut the bunch of bananas off, as clean as you'd wish. But somehow Humbo stood underneath and his wide pink mouth was wide open and that was the end of that bunch of bananas.



So Little-Boy-Bumbo went along the edge of the fence and found another bunch. He took his bow and fitted the arrow to it again. He drew the string and took aim and let go.

The string said, "Whan...g!" The arrow said, "Whi...ish!" and went straight for that bunch of bananas.

But Humbo's mouth was right underneath and wide open. And that was the end of the second bunch of bananas.

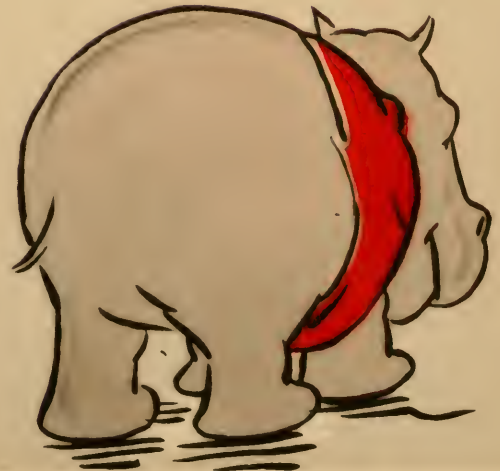
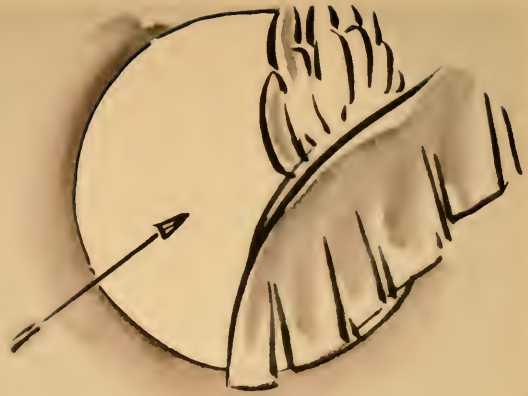


"Ki!" said Little-Boy-Bumbo.
"I've got to get home before
the moon gets big and high.
Please don't eat any more
bananas!"

Humbo-The-Hippo looked
sadly at Little-Boy-Bumbo.

Then he turned his back, so
as not to see the next bunch
of bananas.

Little-Boy-Bumbo picked up
the arrow and fitted it to his
bow, and drew the string
once more. He took aim and
let go, and the string said,
"Whan...g!" The arrow
said, "Whi...ish!" and
went straight for a third
bunch of bananas.



This time Humbo wasn't underneath and
Bumbo was able to save the bananas.
He picked them up and laid them
across Humbo's back and
scrambled on behind them.



He stuck his feet into the pockets of the red coat and gave the hippo a prod with one foot and a prod with the bow, and said, "Go on—home!" And Humbo turned and started. "My home, I mean," said Little-Boy-Bumbo.



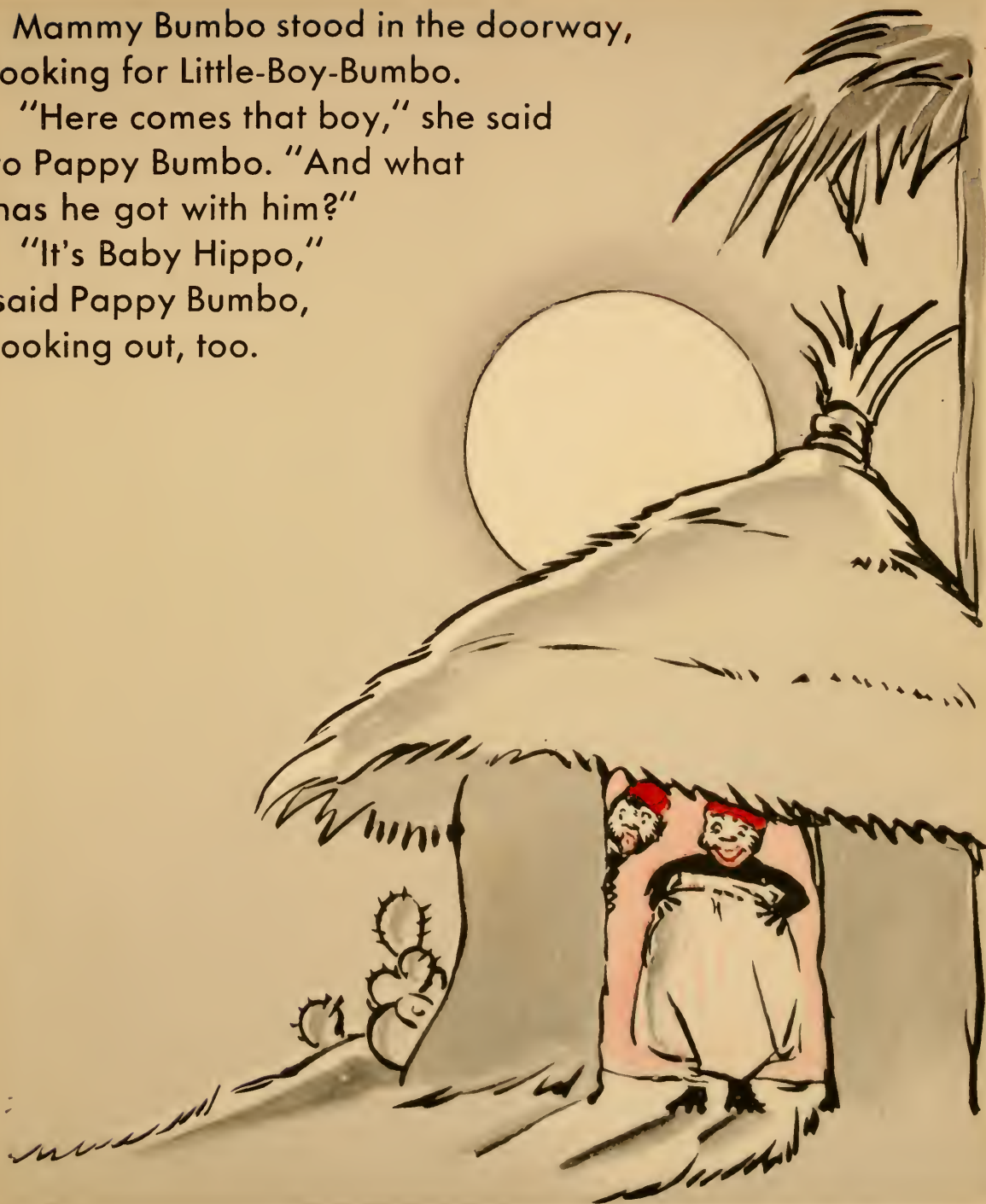
It was quite a long way home. But Little-Boy-Bumbo knew a short cut over the river and through the tall green grass and green boughs that swept down. Humbo was sleepy. Bumbo was sleepy, too. He prodded the hippo very hard and Humbo trotted very fast. The moon wasn't very big nor very high before they reached Bumbo's home again.



Mammy Bumbo stood in the doorway,
looking for Little-Boy-Bumbo.

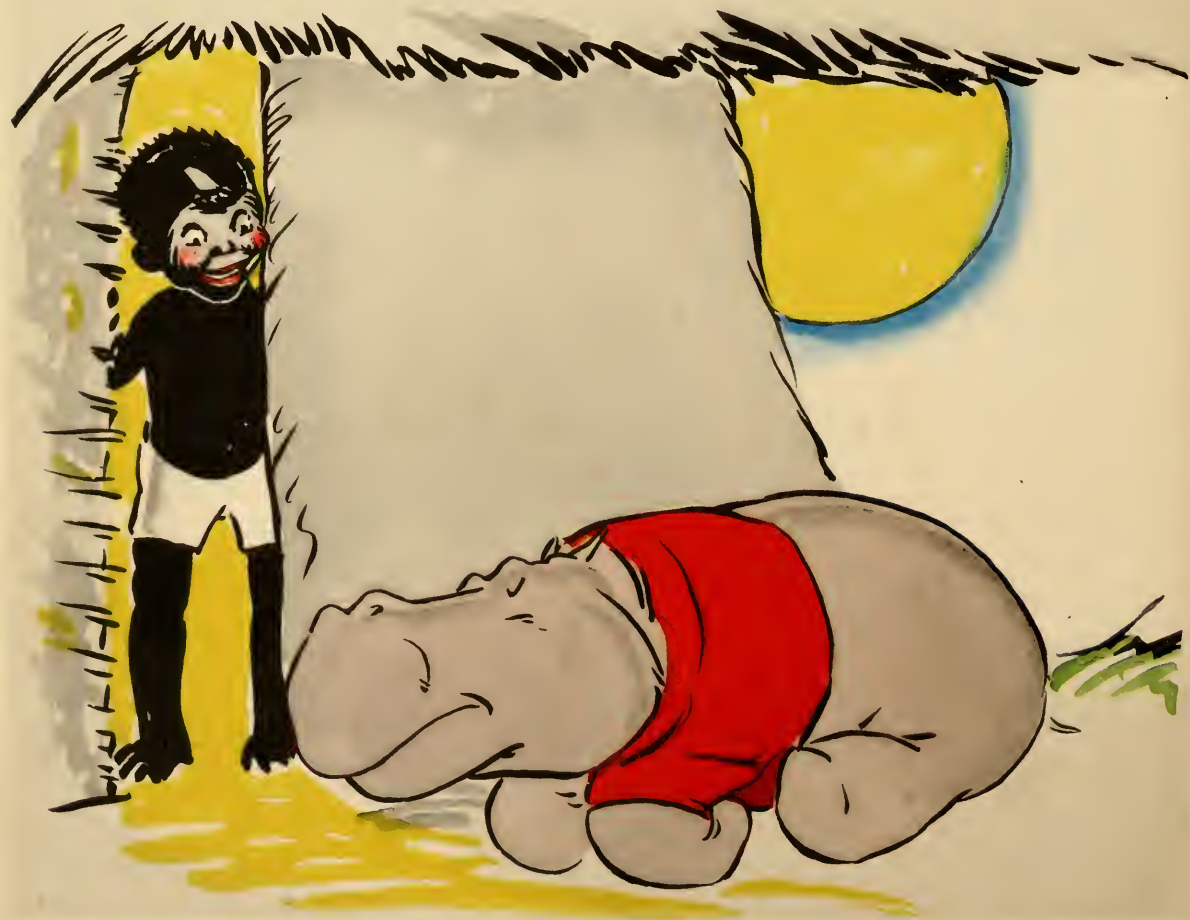
"Here comes that boy," she said
to Pappy Bumbo. "And what
has he got with him?"

"It's Baby Hippo,"
said Pappy Bumbo,
looking out, too.



"Well, I won't have that animal inside the house," said Mammy Bumbo. "But he's brought home my bananas, and nice ones, too. To-morrow he can help you make the path I wanted."

So Little-Boy-Bumbo said to the hippo, "Will you wait outside for me? I'll be out in the morning." And he went inside and shut the door and had some supper. Just before he went to bed Bumbo looked out. Humbo had lain down and gone to sleep in the moonlight.



"I wonder," said Little-Boy-Bumbo, "what baby hippos eat!" And he went to bed.

Of course the nicest thing about it all was the path! For Humbo and Little-Boy-Bumbo had been everywhere that Mammy Bumbo wanted the path to go. And it was wide like Humbo's hips and flat like his feet.

Pappy Bumbo didn't have to work next day, after all.





The-Place-
Where-the-
Water-Comes-Up

Little-Boy
Bumbo's
House

Jungle

The Place-
Where-the
Water-Flows

Breadfruit

Paw-Paws

Galumbo's
House

Sugarcane

When
Moon w
and H

Jungle

The
Market

Bananas



